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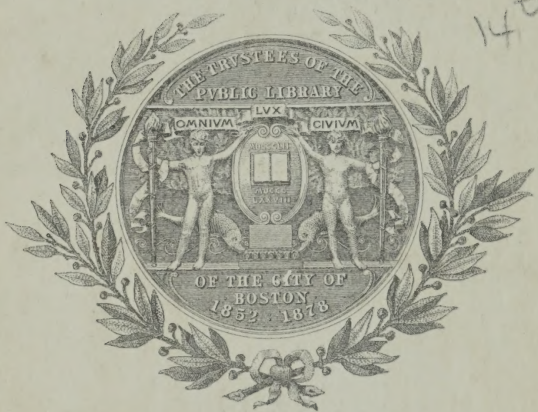

GIVEN BY

Francis J. Garrison.

MINUTES

OF

THE PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Fourteenth American Convention

FOR PROMOTING THE

ABOLITION OF SLAVERY,

AND

IMPROVING THE CONDITION

OF

THE AFRICAN RACE:

+264.80

ASSEMBLED

AT PHILADELPHIA,

On the ninth day of January, 1815—On the eighth day of January, 1816—and by adjournments until the twelfth of the same month, inclusive.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED BY W. BROWN, CHURCH ALLEY.

1816.

Ent. May 9, 1905.

MINUTES

OF

THE PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Fourteenth American Convention

FOR PROMOTING THE

ABOLITION OF SLAVERY, &c.

SELECT COUNCIL CHAMBER.

January 9th, 1815.

THIS being the day appointed by the Constitution for the meeting of the American Convention for promoting the Abolition of slavery, &c. several members assembled.

James Milnor was appointed Chairman, and Benjamin Williams Secretary.

It appearing that Delegates from the Pennsylvania Abolition Society only were present, a quorum was not formed.

On motion Resolved, That the Meeting of the American Convention, &c. be adjourned to the second Monday in January 1816, and that the chairman be requested to address letters to the presiding officers of the societies usually represented in this convention, giving them information of this result. And also that he address letters to such persons in

other states as he may deem likely to promote either a delegation from them, or communications respecting the state of our concern in their vicinity. Adjourned.

Attest

BENJAMIN WILLIAMS, Sect'y.

SELECT COUNCIL CHAMBER.

January 8th, 1816.

THIS being the period to which the Convention adjourned to meet, the following members attended—viz.

James Milnor, Benjamin Tucker, Joseph M. Paul, and Roberts Vaux.

James Milnor was appointed Chairman pro tem. and Roberts Vaux Secretary pro tem.

It was stated that representatives had been appointed by the New York and Delaware Societies, and that they were expected in Philadelphia on or before the 9th. inst.

On motion Resolved, That when the convention adjourn it do adjourn to meet to-morrow morning at 11 o'clock. Adjourned.

JANUARY 9, 1816.

Convention met pursuant to adjournment.

Representatives attended from Pennsylvania and Delaware, who, not forming a quorum, adjourned to meet to-morrow morning at 10 o'clock.

January 10, 1816.

Convention met pursuant to adjournment.

A sufficient representation appearing to be present to form a quorum for the regular transaction of the business of the convention, credentials were then produced, in conformity to which the following persons were duly appointed by their respective societies to represent them in this convention, viz.

Pennsylvania—Thomas P. Cope, Timothy Paxson, James Milnor, John Sergeant, Joseph M. Paul, Roberts Vaux, Benjamin Tucker, Joseph R. Jenks, Joseph Lea, and Benjamin Williams.

New York—Nathan Comstock, Robert C. Cornell, Joseph Curtis, Isaac Hatch, Reuben Leggett, Willet Seaman, Thomas Tucker, William W. Wooden, Isaac M. Ely, and James Nelson.

Delaware—John Reynolds, Cyrus Newlin, Joseph Bringhurst, and Evan Lewis.

Of whom were present, James Milnor, Thomas P. Cope, Joseph M. Paul, Roberts Vaux, Benjamin Tucker, Joseph R. Jenks, from Pennsylvania.—Reuben Leggett, Isaac M. Ely, and Thomas Tucker, from New York.—And John Reynolds, Cyrus Newlin, Joseph Bringhurst, and Evan Lewis, from Delaware.

James Milnor was unanimously chosen President, John Bacon (a member of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society) Secretary, and Thomas P. Cope Treasurer.

Reuben Leggett, Evan Lewis, and Joseph M. Paul were appointed to examine and settle the account of the treasurer of the convention.

Such part of the minutes of the last convention as it was thought necessary at this time to notice were read.

The following communications from the Pennsylvania, New York, and Delaware societies were read, and referred for consideration to a committee of arrangement, who were desired to report to a future meeting such matter as might appear to them necessary to claim the attention of the convention.

Thomas Tucker, Roberts Vaux, and Evan Lewis were appointed.

To the American Convention for promoting the Abolition of Slavery, &c.

The approaching period for holding your triennial assembly has occasioned a recurrence to your last circular address and minutes of proceedings. We well recollect that the reading of that address in our quarterly meeting of April 1812 had a peculiarly animating effect. It was heard with mingled emotions of pain and pleasure. Pain at the prospect of the magnitude of the work yet to be accomplished and smallness of the number of labourers—Pleasure at the zeal and activity manifested by those engaged, increased by the hope that their earnest and affectionate call for assistance would be heard, answered, and complied with.

On the part of this society we are sorry to say much has not been done. A concise summary of the little we have attempted we now proceed to lay before you.

The memorial to our state legislature, alluded

to in our last address to your body, soliciting the enactment of a law more effectually to punish and prevent the practice of kidnapping, was prepared and presented by a committee expressly deputed to the seat of government for that purpose in the spring of 1812. The memorial was read in both houses, and referred by the lower to a committee, who subsequently reported a bill drawn by counsel of this society embracing sundry amendments to the existing laws of Pennsylvania relative to the subjects of the memorial. The bill was not acted upon at that time, nor has it been taken into consideration since.

In the early part of last year a proposition was made in our state legislature to create a distinction between the white and coloured inhabitants of the state, in the punishment of crimes, extremely degrading to the latter. Against this partiality and injustice we remonstrated by memorial. The proposed alteration of the criminal code did not prevail.

About the same time we addressed congress and the executive on the subject of the African slave trade carried on by citizens of the United States under cover of foreign flags; suggesting the propriety of opening a friendly discussion with those governments whose flags were so employed in order to correct or prevent such abuses. The lateness of the session when the memorial was presented, and the multiplicity of business claiming a priority of attention, prevented its being acted on at that time, and no suitable opportunity has since occurred to press for the consideration.

Our acting committee have attended to the duties of their appointment with their usual care, and have extended advice, relief, and assistance in numerous instances. There is one practice, however,

very prevalent in this city which has hitherto baffled their exertions to suppress it, and against which there appears to be no legal remedy. Poor people of colour are enticed by the artful and unprincipled to bind out their children for a term of years—generally under the specious pretexts of relieving the parents from a burthen and providing comfortable places for the children, and sometimes by the payment of a sum of money. For a valuable consideration an immediate transfer is made of the indenture, and the child cannot be traced to its new owner.

The society being in possession of a handsome lot of ground in this city, have had a neat two storied brick building erected thereon, fitted up for a school house; and schools for the free instruction of children of both sexes opened therein under the superintendance of a board of education. One for boys, committed to the care of a competent male teacher in the lower room, and another for girls, taught by a female in the upper. Three hundred and three children have partook of the benefits of the institution since its establishment, and there are now seventy males and fifty females enjoying its advantages. These are small numbers compared with the black population of the city, objects of this charity—but our funds are too limited at present to embrace a greater.

While, however, we regret the incompetency of our powers to do more in this particular, we rejoice in being able to state that the coloured people themselves, aware of the inestimable advantages of education, have turned their own attention to the important subject. Several pay schools are supported by those parents able and willing to educate their children—several free schools are established and maintained by religious and benevo-

lent societies for the poor of their respective congregations, and for the destitute generally—and many young men apply a part of their hard earnings through the day to the acquisition of school learning in the long winter evenings. In addition to which the school long since established by the society of friends is still maintained, and has at present nearly one hundred scholars enjoying its benefits. So that upon the whole this branch of our concern appears to be in a flourishing situation.

Although it is manifest that in regard to some of the objects of our association a tide of prejudice, popular and legislative, sets strong against us; yet in respect to others, we are stemming the torrent, assisted by a favoring breeze, and have a fair prospect of ultimately reaching the desired haven. Much has been done for this oppressed race of human beings. There are many well wishers to the righteous cause, willing to do more at every suitable opportunity—in due time these shall reap a plenteous reward if they faint not.

We have appointed Thomas P. Cope, Timothy Paxson, James Milnor, John Sergeant, Joseph M. Paul, Roberts Vaux, Benjamin Tucker, Joseph R. Jenks, Joseph Lea, and Benjamin Williams our representatives in this convention, and as usual annexed a list of officers.

Signed on behalf of the Pennsylvania Society for promoting the Abolition of Slavery, &c.

THOMAS PARKER, Vice President.

Attest, Benjamin Williams, Sect'y.

LIST OF OFFICERS

OF THE

Pennsylvania Society for promoting the Abolition of Slavery, &c. for the year 1815.

President....CASPAR WISTAR, M. D.

Vice Presidents....{THOMAS PARKER, JOSEPH M. PAUL.

Treasurer....THOMAS PHIPPS.

Secretaries....{BENJAMIN WILLIAMS, ABRAHAM L. PENNOCK.

Counsellors—William Lewis, William Rawle, John Hallowell, John Sergeant, William L. Delany, George Vaux, Peter A. Browne, (Philadelphia); Abraham Chapmam, (Bucks); John Ross, (Northumberland); Charles Smith, (Lancaster); George Fisher, (Dauphin).

Electing Committee—William Master, Thomas Phipps, Gilbert Gaw, Benjamin H. Yarnall, Abraham L. Pennock, Joseph Parker, William Wayne, jun. Benjamin Cresson, William Bryant, Isaac Smedley, Philip Price, jun. Joseph Walton.

Board of Education—Joseph Clark, Benjamin Tucker, Thomas Phipps, Joseph M. Paul, Abraham L. Pennock, Joseph Walton, William Wayne, jun. Charles C. French, Philip Price, jun. Joseph Lea, Thomas Shipley, Benjamin H. Yarnall, Lindzey Nicholson.

Committee of Correspondence—Timothy Paxson, Thomas P. Cope, Benjamin Williams, Nathan Smith, Abraham L. Pennock, Roberts Vaux, Jonah Thompson.

To the Convention of Delegates for promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and improving the condition of the African race, to be assembled at Philadelphia, on the ninth day of the next month:

"The New York Society for promoting the manumission of slaves, and protecting such of them as have been, or may be liberated," feeling a renewed conviction of the benefit, which may result from occasional meetings of a convention, composed of the different abolition societies; and believing, that the cause of justice and humanity may be further promoted by the exertions of our brethren, when convened from various parts of the union, we are induced at this time to address you, as our fellow-labourers, in promoting this great work, which is intimately connected with the welfare of millions of the human race, who still continue in a state deplorable and wretched.

Your circular address of 1812, to the several abolition societies, has been received; the tenor of which is calculated to encourage not only the well meant endeavours of individuals, but also of associated bodies, in their zeal and efforts towards the accomplishment of the important object of our institutions. This object is nothing less than the total extinction of a species of human degradation, nefarious in its origin, contrary to every principle of humanity, and repugnant to the purity of that religion which breathes "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men."

Although we are sensible that much has been done by individuals as well as by legislative interposition, both in Europe and America, towards promoting the abolition of the slave trade, and the emancipation of our fellow men from slavery; yet,

while, on the one hand, the slave trade is tolerated under any modification, and, on the other, we have to contemplate the melancholy fact, that in our own country there still remain in bondage more than a million of the human family, we must acknowledge there is still much to be done ere these great evils can be removed, and we be enabled to wash our hands in innocency, and to rejoice in the deliverance of so many unhappy captives.

In tracing the progress of individuals who have nobly embarked in the cause of benevolence, we have seen the wonderful effects of a steady uniform perseverance. Of this, we have a remarkable instance in the exertions of Thomas Clarkson, who has long been a zealous and successful labourer in the abolition of the slave trade, and who, in his treatise on the history of that subject, has done much towards enlightening the mind, by pourtraying the dreadful consequences of slavery. As it is desirable that we should use all justifiable means to inform the understanding, as well as to soften the heart, would not the distribution of this work among our southern brethren, especially if it were compressed into one volume, be productive of good, and calculated to promote the cause in which we are engaged. Our benevolent friend Thomas Clarkson and his coadjutors were very active in spreading tracts on the subject: thereby gradually paving the way for the accomplishment of the great object in which they finally succeeded. If the convention should think well of the measure, some plan might be devised for the abridgment, and the circulation of a large number of them.

We cannot but regret that the laws of the United States should be defective in any point, whereby avaricious unprincipled men are enabled to

elude their operation. The British parliament found their first act of abolition deficient: but, by a supplementary one, which makes the violation of it a felony, punishable by transportation, or imprisonment and hard labour, at the discretion of the court, the probability is that it now operates in terrorem, and may eventually be effectual. If our government were to do the like, it might prove to be a co-operation of power not to be resisted. Of the propriety of addressing congress on this subject, also, as it relates to domestic slavery, we leave the convention to judge.

Since the last meeting of the convention we made an application to our legislature, soliciting the entire abolition of slavery in this state. We were encouraged to hope that success would attend our exertions; as the governor had mentioned the subject favourably in his speech: but, owing to a concurrence of adverse circumstances in the course of the session, we were disappointed. As we still, however, entertain a prospect of finally succeeding, we shall not relax our exertions until the object be accomplished.

The education of the children of the African race continues to claim our serious and unremitted attention. We have recently built a school house on a lot of ground presented to the society by the corporation of this city, which will accommodate about two hundred and fifty scholars; with this number we hope shortly to have it filled; and as this is a subject of primary importance, and intimately connected with the progress of emancipation, we trust it will become a more prevailing concern in every part of our country.

The standing committee, on whom more particularly devolves the active service of promoting the manumission of slaves, and protecting such of

them as have been liberated, appear to have been vigilant in performing the duties assigned them. Since our last address to you, they have succeeded in extending to one hundred and twenty three of our fellow beings the blessings of freedom; and they have now forty five undecided cases under their care.

Although, in the course of our attention to this work of benevolence, we have had to encounter many difficulties, which will always be the case where avarice and prejudice are combined to oppose the efforts of philanthropy and the dictates of religion; yet, while we are acting on conscientious ground, and feel the rectitude of our movements, we shall be enabled to rise superior to every attempt, whether secret or open, to counteract and oppose this work of justice and humanity. May we, therefore, rely on that Power which is altogether sufficient; and, under the influence of divine aid, faithfully persevere in the cause which we have espoused.

We have chosen as delegates, to represent us in the next convention, the following persons: namely,

Nathan Comstock, Robert C. Cornell, Joseph Curtis, Isaac Hatch, Reuben Leggett, Willet Seaman, Thomas Tucker, and William W. Wooden.

The following is a list of the officers of this society at the present time.

President....Cadwallader D. Colden.

Vice Presidents....{Valentine Seaman, George Newbold.

Secretaries....{Jeremiah Thompson, Thomas Tucker.

Treasurer....John Murray, Jun.

Register....Nathan Comstock.

Benjamin Clark, Cadwallader D. Colden, Thomas Addis Emmett, Peter A. Jay, Peter Jay Munro, William Sampson, William Slosson, John Wadsworth, Counsellors.

Willet Robbins, chairman, and Reuben Leggett, secretary, of the Standing Committee.

Sylvanus F. Jenkins, chairman, and Thomas Collins, secretary, of the Trustees of the School.

Willet Seaman, chairman, and Walter Sawyer, secretary, of the Committee of Ways and Means.

George Newbold, chairman, and William Slosson, secretary, of the Committee of Correspondence.

Signed by order, and in behalf of the Society, by

CADWALLADER D. COLDEN, President.

JEREMIAH THOMPSON, Secretary.

New York, 12*th. mo.* (*December*) 12*th.* 1814.

To the American Convention for promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and improving the condition of the African race:

THE "New York Society for promoting the manumission of slaves, and protecting such of them as have been, or may be liberated," has been recently informed that a meeting of the American Convention will be held in Philadelphia in the ensuing week. This intelligence has afforded much satisfaction to the society in New York; and it is hoped that the concentrated information, and the united labours of the delegates who may assemble,

will be productive of effects highly favourable to the great object of emancipation.

A communication which was intended to have been laid before the convention last year, and which is now forwarded, will acquaint it with the subjects which this society is desirous of bringing under its notice. To this communication it is not thought necessary to make much addition. It may not, however, be unacceptable to the convention to be informed, that, since the date of that address, the manumission society of this city, by the efforts of its standing committee, has been the instrument of procuring the freedom of fifty-eight human beings; and thirty-three unfinished cases are, at present, under the care of its committee.

It is also cause of great satisfaction to be able to state, that the hopes which were entertained in respect to the school under the care of this society, have been fully realized. During the past year, an average of more than two hundred children have been taught in it; and the number of scholars, at the present time, of both sexes, is two hundred and fifty-eight. Although the funds of the society have been, for some years, principally derived from private donations and subscriptions, it is now but justice to the legislature of this state to mention, that this institution has received a handsome proportion of a fund, which has been liberally appropriated for the purpose of promoting and encouraging common schools in every part of the state. And it is hoped that this liberal and permanent appropriation, with its other sources of income, will enable the society still further to enlarge its school, and thereby be of increased benefit to the community.

In addition to the delegates previously chosen to represent this society in the convention, it has

also appointed Isaac M. Ely and James Nelson, to whom, with their colleagues, the society refers the convention for further explanations of its prospects and opinions.

The offices of the society are filled by the same persons as is mentioned in the communication accompanying this, except as follows:

Robert C. Cornell has been appointed registrar—Isaac M. Ely, a counsellor, in the place of John Wadsworth—Joseph Curtis, chairmam, and George F. White, secretary, of the Standing Committee—And John Murray, jun. chairman of the Trustees of the School.

Signed by order, and in behalf of the society aforesaid, in New York, the 6th of the 1st month, (January) 1816.

George Newbold, Vice President.

Jeremiah Thompson, Sect'y.

To the American Convention for promoting the Abolition of Slavery.

In addressing the convention after a lapse of four years, it would be peculiarly gratifying to the Delaware Society for promoting the abolition of slavery, could we report a progress in the cause of liberty and justice commensurate with our wishes, and with the opportunities which so long a period might be supposed to afford. When we look back at the bright prospects which opened on this cause within the last twenty years, and recur to the joyful feelings excited by the just anticipations of speedy success in this conflict with cruelty and wrong, we cannot but feel the pressure of that

gloom which is the consequence of disappointment and defeat.

These feelings have been rendered more acute by a review of the numbers who have deserted us. In the hour of trial many of the timid and the lukewarm have left our ranks, and those who felt themselves bound to support this righteous standard, yielding to the weight of discouragement which pressed on them from various quarters, became less active than the state of the times required.

It is hardly necessary to state that the consequence has been an extension of the traffic in human beings, and the grossest violations of natural justice. Animated by the confidence of impunity, the kidnapper has invaded the dwelling of the freeman, and dragged his victims into exile and slavery.

The difficulties which have conspired to produce this state of things have been various; but we may trace their origin to that fruitful source of evil, "the love of money." The increasing demand for the produce of the southern states has induced the planter to offer high prices for slaves. The pernicious effects of this offer are extensively manifest—Its poison has been insinuated into various classes of society—The slave holder has powerfully felt it, and it has given birth to a numerous and loathsome brood of dealers in human flesh, whose activity and perseverance are worthy a better cause. But it is a circumstance of the deepest regret that this baleful influence has been felt in our courts of justice, and in our state legislature. Professional men in the former, who were once connected with this society, have accepted fees to plead against the innocent, and to advocate the cause of the oppressor—and in the latter, a law has been enacted affecting *those who are free*,

which militates not only against the plainest rights of man, but affords to the unprincipled dealer easy opportunity to sell them into perpetual slavery. We have cause of humble gratitude to the Benevolent Ruler of the universe in that under our excellent mode of government he has sown the seed of reform at the root of every national evil. Where the mind of man is unshackled—where he is free to think, *gross evils* cannot long lay unnoticed nor unlamented, and where he is at liberty to express his sentiments they will be exposed; happily for the cause in which we are engaged, the evils we lament have advanced to this crisis—a feeling of indignity at these violations of justice begins to be manifest. A petition expressive of this feeling, and couched in energetic language, has been circulated—a large number of the most respectable citizens of this place of different religious denominations have given it their sanction, and we hope our legislature will have sufficient virtue to accede to our request, and abolish a law so disgraceful in its nature and dishonourable to our state.

This society too, as the guardian of those rights which our laws acknowledge to belong to the descendants of Africa, has been animated to renew its exertions in their behalf. Some of our members who had seriously contemplated a dissolution of the society, under an idea that its existence was detrimental to the cause of emancipation, have consented again "to take the labouring oar," and a number of younger men who have lately joined us, seem cordially disposed to bear a part in this honourable toil. Accounts have lately been received from our fellow labourers in the lower counties of this state, which convey the pleasing information of increasing concern and activity amongst them for the protection and welfare of this people. A petition

against the law before alluded to has been circulated in that quarter, and we understand they have a representation to attend to the subject before the legislature. The subject of education, so closely connected with the cause of abolition, we are happy to state has received considerable attention in this place. A society, formed a few years since for the express purpose of educating black and coloured children, has a school now under its care taught by a black man—about thirty scholars are constantly receiving the benefits of the institution, and by the facility with which they take instruction, are silently, but certainly undermining the prejudice which has existed unfavourable to their capacities. The foundation of a library of religious and moral publications for the use of the children of this school has been laid, and we hope it may prove a useful auxiliary to their most important interests. It is with pleasure too that we recur to the general state of the free black population in this vicinity. When we consider the almost total want of moral education which this poor people suffer—when we consider the hardships of a state of slavery, where necessity sometimes compels to dishonesty, we are prepared not only to expect, but mentally to palliate occasional deviations from the path of rectitude—but in this case it is honourable to *them* and cause of encouragement to *us*, that we are enabled to say, they are equally honest and industrious—quite as sober and orderly as other citizens in the same sphere of life. They have two meeting houses in this place which are well attended, and an increase of order and good conduct, the regular consequence of religious concern, is observable among them.

We have appointed John Reynolds, Cyrus Newlin, Joseph Bringhurst, and Evan Lewis to attend the ensuing convention as our delegates.

The following are the Officers of the Society.

President....Isaac Dixon.
Vice President....Cyrus Newlin.
Treasurer....William Seal.
Secretary....John Reynolds.

Acting Committee—James Brian, John Jones, William Seal, and Edward Gilpin.

With desires that no discouragement may improperly deter you from prosecuting with energy such measures as may tend to rouse the friends of emancipation to renewed exertion in this righteous cause, and fully believing that a blessing will finally attend the labour, we are your friends.

Signed by order of the Abolition Society of Delaware.

Isaac Dixon, President.

Attest, John Reynolds, Sect'y.

Wilmington, 1st mo. 4th, 1816.

Adjourned until 7 o'clock this evening.

Evening, 7 o'clock.

Pursuant to adjournment, convention met:

Present—James Milnor, President; Thomas P. Cope, Benjamin Tucker, Joseph R. Jenks, Roberts Vaux, Joseph M. Paul, John Reynolds, Cyrus Newlin, Joseph Bringhurst, Evan Lewis, Reuben Leggett, Thomas Tucker, and Isaac M. Ely.

The committee of arrangement, to whom the communications from the several societies were referred for consideration, submitted the following report, together with the resolutions thereto annexed.

The Committee of Arrangement having deliberately considered the several interesting communications which were referred to them, Report:

That in their opinion, the American Convention of Delegates have assembled at a period, and under circumstances, peculiarly auspicious and important.

Auspicious, because it would seem that the conflicting passions, which have spread over the nations of the earth all the awful calamities of war, have by the interposition of Divine goodness and mercy, been in great measure allayed, and in the place thereof, dispositions favourable to the inculcation of the most benign principles have been manifested. Among these evidences of justice and right, is witnessed on the part of those kingdoms and states in Europe, who long and deeply participated in the high offending against injured Africa, a desire to atone for the crimes which they have committed, by an united determination effectually in future, to abolish the slave trade.

Auspicious, because it is believed that in our own country, where the slavery of the human species is still extensively tolerated, there are proofs of honourable and sincere desires, even amongst those who possess their fellow being in bondage, to meliorate their condition, and, if possible, by some means to purify themselves from an offence which violates the great obligations of christianity,

and insults the principles of our free and happy system of national government.

Important, because under all these favourable circumstances, it is of great consequence that the convention should duly appreciate the effect which may be produced by its judicious interposition; to encourage, within the sphere of its influence, the spirit of reflection which appears to have been awakened in the minds of those whom prejudice and ignorance may have heretofore lulled into security and unsafe repose—to call upon the legislators of the nation to keep pace with the progress of the light which may be shed upon the public mind, in relation to the great object of gradual and final emancipation, by the enaction of laws which may ultimately produce an event so desirable.

Your committee observe with the most unaffected pleasure that the Societies of New York, Delaware, and Pennsylvania, have, since their former reports, renewedly directed their attention to the subject of education. This indispensable object of care exercised toward our emancipated brethren of Africa, cannot but produce the most substantial benefits.

Whilst, however, your committee recognize the efforts which have been thus employed to improve the condition of the objects of our sympathy and regard, it is lamentably true, that there is great cause for regret, that, owing to the increased price of people of colour in some of the southern states, there are found individuals base enough to lend their time and services to invade the soil of those states where freedom has decreed, and maintains by the sanction of law, "*that all men are born equally free*," and convey from these asylums of liberty, citizens, who merely because they are descendants of Africa, are supposed to be fit subjects

of unconditional servitude and unpitying oppression. The cruel practice of kidnapping has much increased; and your committee conceive, that it is impossible effectually to prevent it by state legislation: they would therefore recommend, that so much of the eighth section of the law of the United States, passed on the second of March 1807, as admits of the conveyance of negroes in vessels, which may transport such persons on the rivers and bays of the United States, be recommended to the attention of Congress by memorial—soliciting some amendment therein, so as to prohibit the facility which is now given to kidnappers by the provision of the section alluded to.

In order more fully to bring the subjects of this report before the notice of the convention, your committee propose the following resolutions for adoption:

Resolved, That a committee of convention be appointed to prepare a memorial to the Congress of the United States; in general terms soliciting its attention to the subject of domestic slavery, and especially requesting an amendment in the eighth section of the law passed on the second of March 1807, more completely restricting the transportation of negroes, from one state to another.

Resolved, That in order to distribute information respecting the views and labours of the friends of abolition in those parts of the United States where such information is deficient, it is expedient to print Clarkson's History of the Slave Trade, in a cheap form, for gratuitous distribution; and that the same be done under the direction of the acting committee, and at the expense of the convention.

Resolved, That a committee be appointed to prepare an address to the Abolition Societies of the United States; encouraging them to continued and

determined efforts in the great and good cause they have undertaken, and especially recommending it to them to persevere in the all important subject of the scholastic and moral instruction of the people of colour.

All which is respectfully submitted.

ROBERTS VAUX,
EVAN LEWIS,
THOMAS TUCKER.

On motion, The Convention proceeded to the consideration of the resolution attached to the report of the committee of arrangement.

The first resolution being under consideration, it was agreed to refer it to Roberts Vaux, Thomas P. Cope and Isaac M. Ely.

The second resolution was referred to Joseph Bringhurst, Benjamin Tucker and Reuben Leggett to consider and report thereon.

The third resolution was adopted, and the following members appointed the committee pursuant to its provisions: viz. John Reynolds, Joseph Bringhurst, and Isaac M. Ely.

The following extract of a letter addressed to a member of this convention was read; the subject being of a nature extremely interesting to the feelings of every member of the convention, it was agreed to refer the subject matter of the extract to a committee to consider and report whether any steps can be taken in furtherance of the views of the benevolent testator: when Joseph Bringhurst, Benjamin Tucker, and Reuben Leggett were appointed.

Extract of a letter from Dr. John Adams to Thomas P. Cope.

"*Richmond Hill, 19th Dec.* 1815.

"A certain Samuel Guest in his early life, was resident in this state and acquired a considerable fortune in slaves and lands. He has died in or about the city of London, and has by his will directed that his slaves shall be emancipated and his lands sold for their benefit.

"By the laws of this commonwealth the slaves cannot be made free unless they shall be removed from our limits. I have advised the executors of Mr. Guest that with your aid Captain Cuffy might be made instrumental in advancing this work of philanthropy, or that the manumitting society (of which I understand you to be a member) might contribute to the much desired object. The number of negroes is about three hundred, of all ages, sexes, and conditions as to character. The amount which will be produced by the sale of land cannot be accurately ascertained, but it is expected that enough will be produced to pay the passage of each to Guinea, and to provide for them when arrived there for at least one year."

On motion resolved, That a committee be appointed to consider at what time and place the meetings of the next convention shall be held. Isaac M. Ely, Joseph R. Jenks, and Evan Lewis were appointed.

Resolved, That when this meeting adjourns, it do adjourn to meet to-morrow evening at 7 o'clock, at Clarkson School-house, Cherry-street.

Adjourned.

Clarkson School-house, Jan. 11, 1816.

Convention met pursuant to adjournment.

Present—James Milnor, President; Thomas P. Cope, Joseph M. Paul, Joseph R. Jenks, Joseph

Bringhurst, John Reynolds, Cyrus Newlin, Roberts Vaux, Thomas Tucker, Isaac M. Ely, Reuben Leggett, Evan Lewis, Benjamin Tucker.

The committee to whom was referred the first resolution reported by the committee of arrangement, submitted the written opinion of William Lewis, Esq. one of the counsellors of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, in relation to the subject referred to in that resolution, which was read and ordered to lie on the table.

The committee appointed to examine and settle the treasurer's account summitted the following report which was read and adopted.

American Convention for the Abolition of Slavery, in account current with Thomas P. Cope, Treasurer.

DR.

Jan. 16, 1812.		
To balance due me,	$ 37	22
Jan. 10, 1816.		
Cash paid for one share of stock Philadelphia Bank,	104	00
Balance	65	28
	$ 206	50

CR.

Jan. 1, 1814.		
By sundry dividends received on Bank stock to this date,	$ 129	50
Jan. 11, 1816.		
Ditto received on Bank stock to this date	77	00
	$ 206	50
Balance due American Convention,	$ 65	28

Errors excepted.

THOS. P. COPE, Treas.

Philad. Jan. 11th 1816.

To the Convention, &c.

The committee appointed to examine the Treasurer's account, Report:

That they have attended to their duty and find that the treasurer Thomas P. Cope has received since last meeting of the convention in 1812, in dividends, from the Philadelphia Bank 206 dolls. 50 cents, and has paid 104 dolls. for another share of stock in said bank. The convention therefore is now in possession of eight shares of Philadelphia Bank stock, value at par 100 dolls. each, and 65 dolls. 20 cents balance remaining in the Treasurer's hands, as per account herewith submitted.

Evan Lewis,
Reuben Leggett,
Joseph M. Paul. } Committee.

Philad. 1mo. 11, 1816.

Several letters addressed to the Pennsylvania Abolition Society were read, from individuals residing in the southern and south-western States, who are desirous to emancipate their slaves, but are prevented by the existing laws of their respective states; these communications exciting renewed feelings of interest in relation to the peculiarly trying situation of the slaves as well as their owners, it was agreed to refer them to the committee to whom was referred the extract of a letter addressed to a member of this convention for their consideration.

The minutes of the acting committee were read.

On motion, The convention proceeded to the consideration of the opinion of Wm. Lewis, Esq. which was again read, and after some time spent in discussing the subject, it was agreed to refer it to the same committee who reported it, to which committee the president was added.

The committee to whom was referred the "second resolution," made report, which was read and referred to the committee on the address.

The following report of the committee to whom were referred the several extracts of letters on the subject of emancipation was read; the convention agreed to adopt the report, and refer it to the committee on the memorial to congress for their attention.

The committee to whom was referred the extract of a letter from Richmond &c. have felt themselves embarrassed by the various difficulties which encompass the subject. It does not appear to the committee that the convention can, at present, propose any specific plan for the accomplishment of the benevolent intention of Samuel Guest. But feeling the importance of the subject, and being impressed with the weight of the responsibility which the advocates of the rights of persons of colour have assumed, we are desirous that we should not permit ourselves to be discouraged by the magnitude of the task, from any reasonable efforts for the advancement of our cause. Your committee therefore propose that a memorial be drafted, representing to the Congress of the United States the simple facts which appeared before us, and respectfully soliciting their consideration of the subject, and that in their wisdom they may devise some remedy for the evil.

The committee appointed to consider on the time and place of holding the next meeting of the convention submitted their report, which was read, and the further consideration of it postponed.

On motion made and seconded, The convention proceeded to the appointment of an acting committee for the ensuing three years, when the following persons were appointed: to wit, Thomas P. Cope, Roberts Vaux, Joseph M. Paul, Benjamin Tucker,

and James Milnor, from Pennsylvania—Reuben Leggett, from New-York—Joseph Bringhurst, from Delaware.

Resolved, That when the convention adjourns, it do adjourn to meet at 10 o'clock to-morrow morning at the Select Council chamber. Adjourned.

SELECT COUNCIL CHAMBER.

January 12, 1816.

Convention met pursuant to adjournment.

Present—James Milnor, Cyrus Newlin, Joseph Bringhurst, John Reynolds, Evan Lewis, Isaac M. Ely, Reuben Leggett, Thomas Tucker, Thomas P. Cope, Benjamin Tucker, Joseph M. Paul, Roberts Vaux.

The committee appointed for the purpose, reported an essay of a memorial to Congress, which was read, attentively considered, and adopted, viz.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, in Congress assembled:

The Memorial of the American Convention for promoting the abolition of Slavery, &c.

Respectfully sheweth,

That being convened for temperate consultation on the interests of that unhappy class of their fellow beings involved in the thraldom of slavery, several subjects have been presented to their consideration, which they have deemed of sufficient importance to submit very respectfully to your attention.

Your memorialists have reason to believe, that the provisions of the acts prohibiting the importation of slaves are evaded by unprincipled in-

dividuals, who in defiance of the benevolent measures of Congress, smuggle into the southern part of the United States, native Africans, and sell them into irredeemable bondage; and that instances still occur of vessels owned and manned by citizens of the United States, being engaged in the shameful traffic in human beings, which the united endeavours of most of the civilized nations of the earth, seem associated to abolish.

Your memorialists presume, with great deference, to solicit the attention of Congress to this interesting subject, with a hope that on a revision of the law referred to, its provisions may be strengthened, especially by an enhancement of the penalties on offenders against a prohibition, which policy, no less than humanity, requires to be carried into full effect.

Your memorialists have been much affected also by the many instances which constantly occur of kidnapping free people of colour in the northern states, and selling them into slavery in the southern: how far this can be directly met by any law to be passed by the legislature of the union, they will not presume to say; most certainly the laws of the individual States do not reach it, as the completion of the offence at once puts the offender out of every fear of the appointed punishment; an arrest not being admissible beyond the limits of the state from which the individual is stolen. But it also frequently happens, that under colour of the provisions of the existing law, providing for the recovery of runaway slaves by their owners, false pretences, surreptitious evidence, insidious artifice, and open violence are used in cases where no legal claim exists. As these acts are manifest abuses of the provisions of the law of Congress, your memorialists submit with much respect, whether, with-

out in any manner weakening the means of legal claimants in the recovery of their slaves, Congress might not inflict such penalties against offenders of the description now referred to, as would prevent the evils complained of, and increase the facilities, by removing prejudices against those who have fair and legal claims.

To one other remaining topic your memorialists invite the attention of Congress. Whatever restrictions the policy of particular states may impose on the emancipation of slaves, which as a subject not under the control of Congress, your memorialists have no design to bring into view, they deem it their duty to state, that inasmuch as no legislative enactment can stop the progress of individual sentiment, and its issuing by one means or another in corresponding acts, so experience has shewn that the gradual amelioration of feeling in the slave-holding states, towards the people of colour is constantly evincing itself in the liberation of their persons from bondage by individual owners; and your memorialists have been made acquainted with several very affecting instances of the existence of such a humane design, where the difficulty of finding an asylum for the persons proposed to be emancipated, has hitherto prevented its execution.

Your memorialists respectfully request Congress to consider how far it may comport with the interests of humanity, and public policy, to set apart a portion of the wide extended territory owned by the United States, for the colonization of legally emancipated blacks, or to adopt some other measure calculated, as well to prevent the injury of the mixture of too large a proportion of such persons amongst the white people of our country, as to provide, under a suitable government, for the civilization, improvement and happiness of them, and their posterity; a measure which would redound no less

to the honour than to the security and welfare of the community.

Signed by order and on behalf of the Convention.

JAMES MILNOR, President.

Attest, JOHN BACON, Sect'y.

Philadelphia, Feb. 1, 1816.

The report of the committee on considering the time and place of holding the future meetings of the convention was taken up, and on motion the report was postponed.

Resolved, That a committee of three members be appointed to consider the propriety of altering the constitutional period for the meeting of the convention. Cyrus Newlin, Joseph M. Paul, and Reuben Leggett were appointed.

The committee appointed to prepare an address to the abolition societies of the United States, reported an essay which was read and ordered to lie on the table.

The convention having reason to believe that many people of colour remain in bondage from difficulties in the minds of their owners as to their future disposition, and from the laws of many of the states prohibiting their residence therein after receiving their liberty—Therefore

Resolved, That the acting committee be instructed to open a correspondence with the African Institution, and with individuals friendly to the cause of emancipation in England or elsewhere, on the interesting subject of providing some asylum for emancipated people of colour.

Adjourned to half past 6 o'clock P. M.

Pursuant to adjournment the convention again met.

Present—James Milnor, Joseph Bringhurst, Cyrus Newlin, John Reynolds, Evan Lewis, Isaac M. Ely, Reuben Leggett, Thomas Tucker, T. P. Cope, Benjamin Tucker, Joseph M. Paul, and Roberts Vaux.

The following report of the committee appointed to consider of the propriety of altering the time of meetings of the convention, was read and unanimously adopted.

To the Convention, &c.

The committee named to consider the propriety of altering the time of holding the stated meetings of the convention, Report:

That the subject has engaged their attention, and they unite in proposing, that the constitution be so amended as that the stated meetings in future be held on the first Third-day of the Eighth month (August)—and that the next meeting take place in the year 1817, instead of the First month (January) 1818.

CYRUS NEWLIN,
REUBEN LEGGETT,
JOSEPH M. PAUL.

Philad. 1 Mo. 12, 1816.

On motion, The report of the committee appointed to prepare an address to the several abolition societies, was taken up, and the essay of an address was read by paragraphs, and with some amendments adopted as follows:

CIRCULAR.

To the Abolition and Manumission Societies in the United States.

The return of peace to our country has enabled the American Convention for promoting the abolition of Slavery, after a year's postponement of its regular session, to resume its labours in the cause of humanity, and again to communicate with the societies it represents, on the great interests committed to its charge.

We feel, and it is with sensible pleasure we record the conviction, that the convention never met under auspices so favourable for "*liberating the captive, and setting the prisoner free*," as those which the Christian world at present exhibits. The rights of suffering humanity, steadfastly maintained by a few individuals in the old world, amidst the horrors of a protracted war, and the turmoils of political revolutions, against obloquy and reproach, the force of confirmed habit, and the hard-heartedness of avarice, have finally succeeded in recommending themselves to the protection of governments and the moral sense of nations. We consider the African slave trade, so far as it can be affected by public and international law, as nearly at an end; and in looking forward to the period of its termination, we recognise with peculiar satisfaction the pledge which our own government has given in the treaty of Ghent, that the influence of our republic, as a member of the great Christian commonwealth, shall be exerted, to confirm throughout the world, the entire extinction of this abominable traffic.

Under such sanctions, the convention feel themselves authorized, not only by their own convictions of right, and the sentiments of the wise and

good in other countries, but also by the progressive and prevailing force of public opinion in our own, to urge with additional emphasis the necessity of a prompt attention to any violations of the laws prohibiting our citizens from engaging in the slave trade: and they confidently hope the energy manifested by the societies in this respect, with the aid of the public authorities, will soon wipe from our land the stigma of lending countenance to a practice equally abhorrent to reason and religion.

In adverting to the duties, which at the present crisis, are more particularly obvious, we would enjoin the necessity of watching with vigilance, and reporting to the proper tribunals, all attempts that may be made to inveigle or steal away people of colour for the purposes of transportation and sale. The convention know that the evil exists, and they are strongly impressed with the belief that it exists to an alarming extent. The almost certain exclusion of foreign importations has given a strong impulse to domestic cupidity, which is constantly engaged in kidnapping the free blacks of the northern and middle sections of the union, and transporting them to supply the waste of life occasioned by the toils and hardships of more southern climates. From this state of things, it will readily appear, that the efforts and cooperation of the societies are still necessary, to suppress a practice so alien to our state laws, and so outrageous to humanity; and from the energy which has characterized the past, we are confident the societies will leave no cause for future regrets.

In contemplating the improvements of the condition of the African race, we are happy to find in the communications from New-York, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, that the efforts made to impart to them the benefits of knowledge, have been crowned

with very great success. This intelligence gives us the more pleasure, because we are persuaded, that the only means of accomplishing the final and complete emancipation of this unfortunate people, throughout our country, is, the extention to them, of the benefits of moral and intellectual cultivation. That their redemption from the thraldom in which they now are, should be preceded, or accompanied by such aids as will qualify them to discharge their relative, social and religious duties; and that these aids, will not, probably, for some time to come, be furnished, except by the efforts of the societies, or the generosity of individuals. We, therefore, recommend with earnestness, that the schools already established, may continue to be patronised; so that the scholastic and moral education of the pupils, may fit them not only to become valuable members of society among ourselves, but that they may be prepared to lead their brethren in the paths of knowledge; and if the legislature should so resolve, become at some future time in this country or in Africa, the germs of a colonial establishment, where our numerous slave population, under the protection of equal laws, guided by the lights of science, and controlled by the influence of religion, might forget the long history of their wrongs, in their gratitude for emancipation.

We would further recommend to the societies, the charge of a subject of pressing importance and immediate interest, which the convention from the shortness of its session, has been unable satisfactorily to dispose of. Several applications have been laid before the convention from individuals in the southern states, where the manumission of slaves is prohibited by law, requesting to be informed in what manner their wishes to free them can be accomplished; and what agency the societies will

take in furthering their benevolent intentions. The extracts accompanying this address, will present the different cases for the deliberation of the societies, who will take such measures concerning them as their wisdom and sympathy may direct.

With a view, however, to obtain if possible some adequate legislative provision, to meet cases of this description, we have by memorial, recommended the subject to the attention of Congress, and hope that in its wisdom some asylum may be designated for those, who are detained in bondage by the laws, in opposition to the humane wishes of their possessors. We have also directed a correspondence to be opened with the African Institution, and individuals friendly to emancipation in England and elsewhere, on the same subject, the result of which will in due time be communicated to the societies. We have also in our memorials to Congress urged the necessity of imposing further and heavier penalties for breaches of the laws against the importation of slaves, and requested the interposition of such constitutional powers, as they may possess, to prevent a continuance of the practice of kidnapping, and the abuses very frequently committed under the laws providing for the apprehension of runaway slaves. And to the end, that any future applications which it shall be expedient to make to Congress on this subject may be reinforced by a full exposition of the evil to be remedied, the societies are requested to collect the particulars of all cases of kidnapping, or abuses of the above mentioned law, which may occur within their respective limits, or come to their knowledge, and transmit the same by their delegates to the next convention.

The convention are persuaded that much of the hostility to gradual emancipation, which prevails in the south, results from ignorance among many

of the slave holders, of the true character of slavery, and of the considerations which prove its impolicy as well as its injustice. Until this obstacle is removed, the work of emancipation cannot succeed; for the march of philanthropy cannot be safe or certain except with the light of truth, and in the path of knowledge.

To subserve this end we have had it in contemplation to publish Clarkson's History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade in a condensed form; but finding our funds inadequate to the purpose, we have instructed the acting committee to use their endeavours to effect the object by means of voluntary contributions, and we beg leave to add to this measure, a recommendation, that the societies should cause to be published from time to time in the public newspapers, such tracts and essays, as will have a tendency to disabuse the minds of slave holders and others on this important subject, and prepare them to approve of a gradual emancipation.

In conclusion, the convention cannot but express its regret, that a larger number of the societies have not been represented at our present meeting; and still more, that several of them, which bore active parts in the early struggles of philanthropy on this great question, should have sunk into apathy, scarcely even retaining the formality of a name. We would remind them, that the triumph of freedom for the blacks, is not accomplished while the means of enjoying it are beyond their reach: that the field for usefulness is not narrowed:—that education can alone give permanency to the conquests of benevolence; and that as they were once unshaken by reproach, and persevered until the popular odium was over, they ought not now that the prospect brightens around us, to abandon the advan-

tages which it has cost them the labour and the patience of years to acquire.

Philad. Jan. 12, 1816.

The convention believing that considerable benefit might arise from the publication of Thomas Clarkson's History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade in a condensed form, but their funds not being adequate to the object,

Resolved, That the acting committee be directed to use their endeavours for causing to be prepared and published an abridgment of said work, by private subscriptions and contributions, or in such other way as they may find practicable for the purpose of sale or gratuitous circulation where it may be useful.

On motion, Resolved, That Thomas Tucker of New-York, and Evan Lewis of Delaware be added to the acting committee.

Resolved, That three members of the acting committee constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Resolved that the acting committee be instructed to publish such number of copies of the minutes of the convention, and of the address to the several abolition societies as they may deem proper; and that they transmit them to the several societies in the usual proportions.

Resolved, That the acting committee be requested to present the thanks of the convention to the Select Council for the use of their chamber.

Resolved, That the acting committee give three months notice of the meeting of the next convention to the several abolition societies in the United States. Adjourned sine die.

Attest, JOHN BACON, Sect'y.